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ABSTRACT

The checklist presented in this paper is intended for the evaluation of secondary reading programs and contains five sections. "School Philosophy and Objectives" looks at programs as they relate to reading instruction. "Organization and Facilities" examines the sequential development of the reading program, program emphasis, types of programs, physical facilities and supplies, and materials and equipment for corrective and remedial reading. "Staff" asks for information on teacher training, inservice opportunities, teacher receptiveness to change, and teacher use of innovations and experimentation. "Pupils" examines opportunities to relate reading with other language skills, continuous evaluation, and development of permanent interests and tastes in reading. "Parents" evaluate familiarity with the reading program, opportunities to participate in various phases of the reading programs, and opportunities to express opinions and make recommendations. Also included is an appendix on "Reading Skills in the Content Area." (WR)

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READING PROGRAMS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

A CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION

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Reading is a fundamental skill necessary for success in school. (It is also important for preparation for college and for vocation.) Every job whether in the home, school, office, factory or farm requires some type of reading. For an effective participation in a democratic society reading is all the more important for every citizen. Of course, even for pleasure and entertainment reading has certain unique advantages over other media because the reader is free from outside control or pressure, in terms of choosing his material, time and place to read. In short, competence in reading is essential for success and satisfaction in academic, social, political, vocational, and personal life of the modern man.

Reading is, however, a complex process which involves a large number of skills. Burkart (2) in her study mentioned 214 reading skills. Although there is no agreement on the number of skills the fact is that all the skills cannot be taught in the primary grades. There are many skills which are taught in the intermediate grades and several which are extended and reinforced at the junior and senior high school levels. Reading is thus a continuous process which permeates all grades in the school and goes beyond it.

At the secondary level content area reading takes most of the class time. Students have to learn the specialized vocabulary and concepts of each subject-matter area. They have to learn study skills and flexibility of reading rate. A list of reading skills for content areas is given in the Appendix. Content area teachers can provide an effective program if they share the responsibility of teaching reading skills in their respective fields.

Many teachers suggest that if a sound basal program is provided in the classroom children will learn to transfer reading skills to the

content areas on their own. Such a transfer, however, does not take place automatically. Students have to be taught how they can apply their skills to other subjects. Another important fact is that although there are some skills common to all areas each area also requires some specific reading skills. Content area teachers have, therefore, a special role in the teaching of reading.

Another factor which necessitates the teaching of reading at the secondary level is the use of a single textbook for all students in the classroom. There is a wide range of reading ability in any classroom. Expecting every student to finish the same textbook in about the same time and be able to perform at the same level with others is against the principles of educational psychology. Moreover, textbooks used in the high school are generally difficult for a large number of students. Beldon and Lee (1) examined the readability level of five science textbooks for secondary schools and discovered that one-third to one-half of the students expected to use them found them difficult. Until suitable textbooks are produced and made available it is imperative that teachers develop necessary skills in students to get the most out of their assigned books.

Lack of reading ability in teenagers is responsible for high rate of dropouts as established by Penty (5). Reading failure may also lead to delinquent behavior. In most cases young adults have the potential and with a proper program of instruction can improve their ability.

What kinds of reading programs can a secondary school offer to meet the needs and abilities of its students? The literature identifies the following four programs:

1. Developmental Reading Program: In this program reading instruction is carried out in a sequential manner in all grades.
2. Corrective Reading Program: In this program students who have minor difficulties in reading are grouped together for special help within the framework of regular classroom instruction.
3. Remedial Reading Program: In this program students who have serious difficulties in reading and are reading below their capacity are taught, generally outside the classroom and on individual basis using diagnostic and remediation techniques.
4. Reading Improvement for the College-Bound: In this program special instructions are provided in vocabulary growth, comprehension, critical reading, study skills, and rate of reading for students who show academic promise.

Because of the pressure of accountability schools are asking how can they assess their reading programs in order to determine the changes necessary for improvement. One most comprehensive and frequently used instrument for secondary school evaluation is the Evaluative Criteria (3). However, it contains only a few questions on reading programs and does not really provide a complete evaluation in this area. The checklist* presented in this paper is an attempt to provide a tool for this purpose.

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* The checklist is based on Sidney Rauch: A Checklist for the Evaluation of Reading Programs, Reading Teacher, Vol. 21, No. 6, (March, 1968), pp. 519-522.

One weakness of the Evaluative Criteria as well as of the proposed checklist is the subjective nature of some questions. It is difficult to lay down exactly what is meant by "adequate" or "satisfactory". It is hoped that the evaluator would use his judgement in answering the checklist. However, the questions have been so designed that the answer expected in each case is either "yes" or "no". Another feature of the checklist is its conciseness. Teachers, consultants, and principals generally prefer simple and quick instruments which do not take too much of their time. The proposed checklist is quite concise and quick.

One important area which the evaluator must keep in mind is the school philosophy and the needs of the community it is supposed to serve. As pointed out by the Junior High School / Middle School Evaluative Criteria (4), "the philosophy and objectives of a school should determine the nature of its program". It is important to know the composition of the community, occupational and educational status of the people, the economic climate, and vocational interests and aspirations of the community. Some communities may be more interested in supporting a vocational and technical program than an academic program. They may not favor a program meant for the college-bound.

Similarly, the philosophy and objectives of a school will influence the kinds of programs it offers. The staff of a certain school may believe that reading instruction stops at grade 6 or that teaching reading is the responsibility of the English teachers only, or that only remedial reading should be taught in secondary school in special classes by special teachers. On the other hand a school may specify

one of its objectives as helping each student read at his capacity level or teaching him to vary his reading speed according to his purpose of reading and the nature of the material to be read. In other words, some schools may believe that reading is a responsibility of the entire faculty and some may be opposed to this idea.

The checklist that follows has five sections. The first section requires a statement of school philosophy and objectives related to reading instruction and the other sections contain questions about various aspects of the program. Space for major strengths, weaknesses and recommendations is also provided.

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION

I. School Philosophy and Objectives: (Related to Reading Instruction)

II. Organization and Facilities:	Yes	No	Comments
1. Is it a 7-12 or 10-12 sequential developmental program?	☐	☐	
2. Does the program emphasize the following:			
(a) Basic Reading Skills	☐	☐	
(b) Study Skills	☐	☐	
(c) Content Area Reading Skills	☐	☐	
(d) Recreational Reading	☐	☐	
3. Does the school provide the following types of program:			
(a) Corrective (for those with minor difficulties)	☐	☐	
(b) Remedial (for those with serious difficulties)	☐	☐	
(c) Reading Improvement (for those with academic promise)	☐	☐	
4. Are physical facilities and supplies in the school library or resource center adequate?	☐	☐	

		Yes	No	Comments
5.	Is there an adequate supply of materials and equipment for corrective and remedial work?	☐	☐	

III. Staff:

1.	Do the teachers have adequate training for teaching reading at their level(s)?	☐	☐
2.	Are they receptive to change?	☐	☐
3.	Do they keep abreast of recent trends through inservice opportunities or intervisitations?	☐	☐
4.	Are they encouraged for innovations and experimentation?	☐	☐

IV. Pupils:

1.	Are they given opportunities to relate reading with other language skills?	☐	☐
2.	Are they being continuously evaluated?	☐	☐
3.	Are they developing permanent interests and tastes in reading?	☐	☐

V. Parents:

1.	Are they familiar with the reading programs?	☐	☐
2.	Are they given opportunities to participate in various phases of the reading programs?	☐	☐
3.	Are they encouraged to express their opinions and make recommendations?	☐	☐

Major Strengths

Major Weaknesses

Recommendations

REFERENCES

1. Beldon, Bernard and Wayne Lee. "Textbook Readability and Reading Ability of Science Students". Science Teacher, Vol. 29 (1962), 20-23.

2. Burkart, Kathyron. "An Analysis of Reading Abilities". Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 38 (1945), 430-439.

3. National Study of School, Evaluation. Evaluative Criteria. Arlington, Virginia, 1970.

4. National Study of School Evaluation. Junior High School/ Middle School Evaluative Criteria. Arlington, Virginia, 1970.

5. Penty, Ruth. Reading Ability and High School Drop-Outs. New York: Teachers College Press, 1956.

APPENDIX

READING SKILLS IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Source: A Guide to the Teaching of Reading, Listening, and Viewing
Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minn., 1959.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading to follow directions.
Reading and rereading to note errors.
Reading symbols--symbol reaction.
Reading of special forms, as: applications, invoices, income tax forms, legal papers, tables, charts, graphs.
Reading related materials.
Reading for meaning from content--dealing with omissions in transcription.
Phrase reading--in longhand and shorthand.
Recognizing that shorthand is alanguage built on other languages.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN FINE ARTS

Art

Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading to follow directions.
Reading measurement and abbreviations.
Reading resource materials in collateral fields--cultural background.
Reading to build understandings and appreciations of other art.
Reading for retention (theory and techniques).
Reading for presentation (oral sharing and examinations).
Reading for detail.

Music

Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading for context understandings--as words in songs.
Reading notes.
Reading symbols.

Reading for enjoyment (special program notes, etc.).
Reading for appreciation.
Reading in collateral areas--music and musicians, historical and cultural settings.
Reading abbreviations.
Reading for sequence.
Reading fingering charts.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SAFETY, AND RECREATION

Reading for information, for instance to develop permanent health and safety habits.
Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading to follow directions (procedures in physical activities, safety rules, etc.).
Reading to evaluate materials.
Reading to evaluate advertising.
Reading to evaluate propaganda.
Reading to develop critical thinking.
Reading graphs, charts and tables.
Reading to comprehend rules.
Reading to recognize sequences (developmental approach to motor skills and safety rules).
Reading to interpret and carry out movement skills.
Reading to interpret data.
Reading to recognize scientifically proven material.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN HOME ECONOMICS

Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading signs and symbols.
Reading abbreviations.
Reading to follow directions.
Reading for sequence.
Reading for measurement.
Reading listings--mainly numbers followed by directions.
Reading for interpretation of pattern directions and symbols.
Reading to determine relationships.
Reading material printed on articles and patterns.
Reading meters, itemized bills, charts, labels, guarantees, record and budget books.
Reading directions and instructions on appliances (concise, abbreviated constructions).
Reading critically to judge advertising and consumers' research reports.
Reading collateral reading in art design, cultural background, psychology and medicine.
Reading to order from a menu.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN INDUSTRIAL ARTS

Reading a specialized vocabulary.
Reading to follow directions.
Reading safety instructions.
Reading tool and instrument use directions.
Reading measurements.
Reading blueprints, layouts, patterns.
Reading symbols, abbreviations, signs.
Reading step by step directions.
Reading to evaluate advertising.
Reading to interpret guarantees and licenses.
Reading to evaluate materials.
Reading consumers' research reports.
Reading do-it-yourself-directions.
Reading instructions for use of finishes--paint, varnish--as sequence directions.
Reading collateral readings in color, design, related science, mathematics, invention, and research.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN LITERATURE

Reading to develop permanent interests.
Reading to develop mature taste.
Reading to pick out essential ideas.
Reading to discover development from one literary age to another.
Reading to interpret literature in terms of the age in which it was written.
Reading to relate the permanent values of literature to immediate social or personal problems in modern life.
Reading to probe for hidden meanings.
Reading to develop psychological awareness; to search for motives of human action and reaction.
Reading to develop a crystallization of attitudes and beliefs.
Reading to cultivate daily the habit of permitting emotion and will to be influenced by the great truth and beauty of literature.
Reading to appreciate literature's impression on other subject matter areas (as historical reporting on novels--etc.).
Reading poetry as a special form, note: rhythm, sound effects--internal rhymes and alliteration--figurative language, word order, abstract subjects, form and type, "reading" imagery and emotional response.
Reading fiction as a special form, note: description, theme, reporting of time, place, people, things, interactions; observe author's purpose, sequence of action, value of shared experience.

Reading drama as a special form, note: form, dialogue, elements of structure, sequence of developments, details vital to plot, condensation, burden placed on reader's imagination.
Reading biography as a special form, note: form--diaries, memoirs, collected letters, travelog--biographer's purpose.
Reading formal essays as a special form, note: importance of having an idea to share; development of a will to change opinions; development of an ability to evaluate opposing points of view.
Reading informal essays as a special form, note: difference in purpose, form, and style from formal essay.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN MATHEMATICS

Reading a specialized vocabulary, as
- General math terms (root, angle, plus, multiply).
- Technical terms (binomial, quadratic, sine).
- Technical terms borrowed from science (kilowatt hour, velocity).
- Expressions of relationships (is equal to, complimentary to, is greater than).

Reading signs and symbols (+, -, =, x, $\surd$).
Reading numbers, cardinal, ordinal, Arabic, and Roman numerals, literal numbers, directed numbers, integers.
Reading equations realizing they are sentences in numerical language.
Reading to place preponderance on proper portion of a sentence in a problem.
Reading to distinguish relevant and irrelevant facts. To do so--read the problem once rapidly for general impression; read it again to put the facts in relationship one to another; read it again to check the organization of interrelationships; calculate.
Reading to understand graphic presentation--title, horizontal axis, vertical axis, rate and direction of change, variable, relationship of variables, approximate data, draw conclusions on data presented.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN SCIENCE

Reading a specialized vocabulary, as
- Terms unique to this science.
- Nonscientific terms new in this context.
- Mathematical terms used in new context.

Reading symbols--note lack of uniformity in names and signs, as promiscuous use of capitals and small letters, Latin symbol, English names (Fe = iron).

Reading problems, formulas and equations, mixed mathematical and verbal language.
Reading diagrams.
Reading charts.
Reading wording of laws.
Reading to pick out key statement in a paragraph.
Reading to develop scientific thinking: suspend judgment, observe data, weigh evidence, distinguish cause and effect, organize data.
Reading to note devices for emphasis and organization such as italicized terms and statements and bold face type for topic and sub-topic headings.

READING SKILLS NEEDED IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Reading a special vocabulary, as
- Legal, historical, political, social, and geographic terms.
- Mathematical concepts.
- Words with everyday meanings and new social science concept--house, tariff wall, bull, watered stock.

Reading to visualize another time and another place.
Reading for temporal sequence.
Reading to establish relationships.
Reading graphic presentation--bar, circle, line, statistical, function, and trend graphs.
Reading for facts, ideas and principles, past and present.
Reading to evaluate propaganda.
Reading to take a stand on controversial issues.
Reading to savor the nature of historical writing.
Learn to test reliability, investigate author, compare reports, establish chronology, test agreement of authorities.